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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: COR DEPUTY SPEAKER GIVES UPDATE ON KEY LEGISLATION

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a May 10 meeting with Khalid al-Attiya, First Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, PolCouns raised the following USG priorities:

-- Provincial powers law. Al-Attiya said that the government had not yet forwarded its comments to the CoR and that he had urged Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Safa al-Safi to hurry up.

-- Elections law. Al-Attiya said that a new elections law was needed. Because the law would require a number of political decisions, al-Attiya said the CoR, and specifically the legal committee, would be the appropriate body to draft it, as opposed to the newly formed Independent Higher Election Commission. He said that the CoR might support an open list system if there were "an easing up" in the current political and security climate.

-- DeBaathification reform. Al-Attiya noted that there was "the will to rethink" the deBaathification law but acknowledged that it was not a political priority for the Shi'a, as they were "wondering what they would get." PolCouns noted that deBaathification reform had become a symbolic issue and as such offered an opportunity to work toward reconciliation.

-- Constitutional review. Al-Attiya said that, as the CoR would not be in session May 15, the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) would be allowed until the following session (likely May 22) to submit its recommendations. He noted that the CRC was making progress but that the key bloc leaders had not become involved. Their involvement would be necessary, he continued, to develop solutions to contested issues such as division of resources and the powers of regions vice the federal government. He urged the USG to put pressure on the bloc leaders to become involved in finding compromises on these issues, arguing that constitutional review was important because its outcome would impact other important laws.

-- The draft law forming a Ministry of National Security (MNS). Al-Attiya confirmed that the draft law had received a first reading in the CoR but said he did not expect it to move quickly. PolCouns noted that the law "could almost have been written by Saddam" as it created a powerful institution with little transparency or judicial oversight. She urged al-Attiya to make sure that CoR members read it closely and considered it carefully. Al-Attiya urged the Embassy to write its "observations" on the law in Arabic and distribute them to key CoR members.

¶2. (C) PolCouns emphasized to al-Attiya how important it was to see progress on key reconciliation legislation in the CoR, "to prove to Iraq's doubters that the democratic system promotes compromise and reconciliation." Al-Attiya responded that he felt confidence that important legislative items

would advance as long as the constitutional review process
set the correct political framework and if the security
situation improved.

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